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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6871  
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 8549  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7872  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 3226  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 9695  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 5440  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 4179  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 001804

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PK](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: BY-ELECTIONS NOW SET FOR JUNE 26

REF: ISLAMABAD 1757

Classified By: CDA E. Candace Putnam, for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: After a firestorm of public criticism, the Election Commission (ECP) reversed its decision to postpone by-elections until August 2008; on May 7, it announced by-elections will be held June 26. This was an embarrassing, if minor, debacle involving multiple excuses and finger pointing among coalition members. In the end, Interior Minister Malik took the blame for following Zardari's orders to postpone the by-elections on flimsy security grounds. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) For the third time, Pakistan's Election Commission (ECP) rescheduled by-elections for 38 national and provincial parliamentary seats. Earlier this week, the ECP announced elections would be delayed until August because of the law and order situation in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). It reconsidered after a firestorm of criticism from political parties and press; the new date of June 26 is only a week later than the original date of June 18.

¶3. (SBU) ECP Secretary Dilshad said the ECP decided to reverse its decision after consulting with political party leaders and the NWFP Chief Minister. Local press suggests the ECP also reconsidered after receiving a "fresh report" from NWFP on the area's law and order situation.

PUTNAM